REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

By the present amendment, claims 2, 8 and 9 are amended; claims 15 - 20 are canceled; and claims 21 – 26 are added. Claims 2, 8 and 9 are amended to correct minor informalities regarding claim term discrepancies. No new matter is added. Claims 1 – 14 and 21 - 26 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 22 being independent.

Applicant has carefully considered the contents of the Office Action and respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of the subject application in view of the explanations noted below.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 – 4 and 7 - 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,493,073 to Honkomp (the Honkomp '073 patent). Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Honkomp '073 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,796,780 to Chatard et al. (the Chatard '780 patent).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Honkomp '073 patent, either alone or in combination with the Chatard '780 patent, clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Independent claim 1 recites a piston-contact element 18 (FIG. 3) slidably receivable in an inner bore 28 through an open end 30 of a housing 26 of an electrical connector 12, as shown in FIG. 2. The piston-contact element 18 is axially movable between a retracted position (FIGS. 9 and 10) and an advanced position (FIGS. 12 and 13). An element retaining groove 52 (FIG. 3) is disposed in an outer surface 54 of the piston-contact element 18, and a bore retaining groove 84 (FIGS. 2 and 9) is disposed in an inner surface 80 of the bore 28. A resilient member 46 is receivable in each of the element and bore retaining grooves 52 and 84 to releasably retain the piston-contact element 18 in either the retracted or advanced positions within the inner bore 28 of the housing 26 of the electrical connector 12.

The Honkomp '780 patent discloses a hermetic terminal assembly 2 adapted to be sealed in an aperture 3 of a chamber defining housing wall 4, as shown in FIGS. 1, 2 and 4. An aperture 13 in the body 6 is adapted to receive a terminal electrical current conducting pin 16. Insulating sleeve members 22 and 23 are disposed on opposite sides of the aperture 13,

as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4. A glass seal 21 is disposed in the aperture 13 between the insulating sleeve members 22 and 23 to seal the inner pin portion 17 of terminal pin 16 within aperture 13 and outer pin portion 18 of pin 16 outside aperture 13. However, the pin 16 of the Honkomp '073 patent does not move between retracted and advanced positions, as recited in independent claim 1, nor does a resilient member releasably retain the pin 16 in one of the retracted and advanced positions, nor does an inner bore of the housing have a bore retaining groove disposed therein.

The Chatard '780 patent is cited for disclosing a high voltage bushing insert. However, the Chatard '780 patent does not cure the deficiencies noted above in the Honkomp '073 patent regarding independent claim 1.

The Honkomp '073 patent does not disclose or suggest a pin axially movable between retracted and advanced positions. The terminal pin 16 of the Honkomp '073 patent has an inner pin portion 17 and an outer pin portion 18. Insulating sleeve members 22 and 23 are disposed on opposite sides of the cup-shaped body 6 to receive the terminal pin. The glass seal 21 is disposed between the insulating sleeves 22 and 23, which are preferably made of a ceramic material, in the body 6 to hermetically seal the pin 16 in the body 6. The Honkomp '073 patent does not disclose or suggest axial movement of the terminal pin 16, as recited in independent claim 1.

The outer pin portion 18 of the terminal pin 16 is connected to a suitable electric current source (not shown, col. 3, lines 48 – 49), and the inner pin portion 17 is connected to an electrical unit (not shown, col. 3, lines 50 – 51). Thus, the combination of the connection of opposite ends of the terminal pin 16 to electrical devices, the glass seal 21 through which the terminal pin 16 passes, the insulating sleeves 22 and 23 through which the terminal pin 16 passes preferably being made of a ceramic material, and the formation of a hermetic seal between the terminal pin 16 and the body 6 further indicate that movement of the terminal pin of the Honkomp '073 patent 16 is not desired such that there is no suggestion or motivation to axially move the terminal pin.

Furthermore, as recited in independent claim 1, the Honkomp '073 patent does not disclose or suggest a resilient member that releasably retains the piston-contact element in either the retracted or advanced positions. The seal 21 through which the terminal pin 16 passes is made of glass, which is not a resilient member. The insulating sleeves 22 and 23 are

preferably made of a ceramic material, which are also not resilient members. Futhermore, there is no disclosure of the seal 21 or the insulating sleeves 22 and 23 having resilient properties.

Still furthermore, insulating sleeve 22 is not a bore retaining groove disposed in an inner surface of the housing, as recited in independent claim 1. The insulating sleeve 22 abuts aperture 13 in the housing 7, as shown in FIG. 4. Thus, the insulating sleeve 22 is not a bore retaining groove disposed in an inner surface 8 of the housing 7. Furthermore, as the terminal pin 16 does not contact the inner surface 8 of the housing 7 in the Honkomp '073 patent, it would not have been obvious to provide a bore retaining groove therein.

Thus, the Honkomp '073 patent does not disclose or suggest a piston-contact element axially movable between retracted and advanced positions and a resilient member that releasably retains the piston-contact element in either the retracted or advanced positions or a bore retaining groove disposed in an inner surface of the housing, as recited in independent claim 1. Lacking elements recited in independent claim 1, the Honkomp '073 patent does not anticipate claim 1 because a "claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Therefore, for the reasons provided above, the Honkomp '073 patent does not anticipate or render obvious independent claim 1.

Regarding dependent claim 14, the Chatard '780 patent does not cure the deficiencies noted above with regard to claim 1, i.e., a piston-contact element axially movable between retracted and advanced positions and a resilient member that releasably retains the piston-contact element in either the retracted or advanced positions. Therefore, claim 14 is allowable over the Honkomp '073 patent in view of the Chatard '780 patent.

Claims 2 – 4, 7 – 13 and 21, being dependent upon independent claim 1, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents, such as the piston-contact element being in the retracted position when the resilient member is received in the element retaining groove and being in the advanced position when the resilient member is received in the bore retaining groove and spaced from the element retaining groove of claim 2; the retaining grooves each being substantially annular and continuous of claim 7; the resilient member

being a substantially ring shaped spring of claim 10; and the resilient member being received in both the element and bore retaining grooves when the piston-contact element is in the retracted position of claim 21. Therefore, dependent claims 2 – 4, 7 - 13 and 21 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

New Independent Claim 22

Similarly to independent claim 1, newly added independent claim 24 recites a piston-contact element axially movable between retracted and advanced positions, a resilient member that releasably retains the piston-contact element in either the retracted or advanced positions, and a bore retaining groove disposed in an inner surface of the housing. As discussed above, these features are not disclosed or rendered obvious by the Honkomp '073 patent, either alone or in view of the Chatard '780 patent. Furthermore, claims 23 – 26, being dependent upon independent claim 22, are also allowable for the above reasons, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

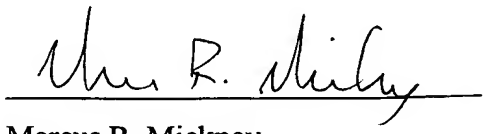
Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indicated allowability of objected to claims 5 - 6, which would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

* * *

In view of the foregoing amendments and comments, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 – 14 and 21 - 26 are in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcus R. Mickney
Reg. No. 44,941

Roylance, Abrams, Berdo & Goodman, L.L.P.
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 659-9076

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